1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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penalty was not only enforced against improper marriage, but even against illicit intercourse on the part of persons within the forbidden limits. Mr. Lyon related to me a case that occurred since he has been living in the country, where the power of the Chief Chirimo was insufficient to protect a man who married his second or third cousin. Fortunately for the delinquents, they succeeded in making their escape, though with difficulty, being followed two or three days' journey by the avengers. 582 684

Infidelity is not rare, and the husband has the redress of whipping the woman and dismissing her if he desires, and of whipping her paramour if he is able. But so cautious are the people about the blood limit of intermarriage, that a woman on giving birth to an illegitimate child, for fear that it will not know the family to which it belongs, will usually brave the punishment, and at once confess its paternity. 837 684 [848]

As cousins are called brother and sister, so are not only the brothers and sisters, but even the cousins of a wife or husband all called indiscriminately brother and sister-in-law; so that a person may on a single marriage find that he has annexed fifty or a hundred of these interesting relations. 601

On the death of the head of the family, the next oldest brother, or in default of a brother, a cousin or uncle assumes his place, and is then called father by the children. This does not involve any especial material duties, such as the support of the family; but is rather a sort of honorary title; giving him, however, the ruling voice in any family council or discussion. 593 768

On the death of an individual; if a young person, a woman, or a person of but little consequence, the body is prepared as soon as possible in the manner described below, and carried to the forest; but if a person of more consideration, there are some preliminary ceremonies. These I had the opportunity of witnessing in the case of an old man who died on the Uron when I was present. He belonged to one of the distinguished families, an ancestor, perhaps his father, having been one of the leaders in the war with Tiribi, and he the heir to, and possessor of, one of the few gold "eagles," or insignia of rank. He died in the night, and next morning, the body being in his hammock, covered with a piece of bark cloth; all of the chicha, chocolate, and food that the poor people of the house could get together on short notice were prepared. A fire was lighted, amidst singing, by twirling a pointed stick in a s cket on the face of another. This was the sacred fire, which was communicated to a small heap of wood placed on one side in the house. This could be used for no common purpose whatever. No ordinary fire could be lighted from it; not even could one use a stick of it to light his pipe. It must burn continuously for nine days. In case of its accidentally going out before that time, it must be relighted in the same manner as at first; and at the end of that time, only a priest could extinguish it, and he only with a calabash of chocolate, and during, or at the end rather, of the suitable incantation. 764 766 [372] [784]

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764 768 The custom of burying or otherwise placing with the dead all of his valuables, evidently existed at one time with these people. The Tiribis, who bury their dead, did so, up to within the memory of persons still living, and all masters that could not be buried, like live stock, fruit trees, &c., were ruthlessly destroyed. A more practical method has grown up [429] with the present generation, and they now divide the property of the defunct among the heirs, with as much avidity as in more enlightened communities. So do the Bri-bris and Cabecars, but these compound with their consciences. Whether the Teribis have a similar custom, I am not prepared to say, not having seen a funeral, and having no information that I consider sufficiently trustworthy.

766 The next step after lighting the fire, was for the master of ceremonies, appointed by mutual consent, to cause to be collected some small scrapings of a peculiar wood, called Palo Cacique by the Spaniards. It is a wood used only for walking sticks, and will be again referred to in that connection. He also obtained a large lump of cotton wool, some seeds of a species of pumpkin, and a small root of sweet yucca. All the male friends of the deceased present, seated themselves on low benches in a double line, facing each other, with another bench between. A part of the cotton, spread out so as to make a bulk about the size of a man's hand, was placed in front of the principal person, who then began in a sing-song tone between a recitation and a chant, to relate the merits and deeds of their departed brother. As he proceeded, and mentioned for instance that he had planted much corn, he laid carefully on the cotton a piece of shaving which he said was the "planting stick" used in that operation. Another laid aside of it a piece of pumpkin seed, which represented the corn. Another taking up the song, related how he had shot fish, and another shaving was the arrow. An impromptu string a couple of inches long, twisted out of the cotton, and stained red with the powder from some annatto seeds, was a rope with which he had led a cow, bought years before in Terraba. This lasted for an hour, until every tool or weapon he had ever used was represented by a little pile of seeds and shavings on the cotton. But he was a great man and his "eagle" was not to be forgotten. A very rude imitation of it was cut out of the skin of the yucca root and placed on top of all his other property, and then the edges of the cotton were doubled over making all into a ball. This was placed on his breast, next his body, and he was thus armed and equipped with all he had used or owned in this world, ready for use in the other; and his heirs none the poorer.

The body was then enveloped in the piece of "mastate" or bark cloth that he had used as a blanket, together with the hammock in which he swung. A quantity of "platanillo" leaves, a leaf not unlike that of the plantain, but only half the size and much tougher, were placed on the ground, two or three deep. The bundle was laid on this, the edges of the leaf envelope, doubled over, and dexterously tied by strips of bark string and the whole turned out a very respectable Egyptian mummy done in

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green. By means of three strings, this was swung under a pole, ten feet long, raised on the shoulders of two men, who trotted off unconcernedly to the woods a mile or so distant. They were accompanied by two or three more, armed with machetes. 766

A little boy whom I had for a servant for a few months, died on one of my journeys. We watched by him and did all in our power to save him, and were assisted by two of our men, one of whom was an "*awa*" or doctor. As soon as we saw that he was dying, and I had given up the last hope, the *awa* took charge. He motioned us all off. From that moment the moribund becomes unclean and only the *awa* can touch him. As soon as we pronounced him dead, the doctor covered him up. Next morning, the death taking place about midnight, without ceremony he was bundled up in his blanket and the usual leaves, and carried off in the same manner to the bush. But he was of no consequence. Only a boy who was nobody and had done nothing. I mention this case to show the difference in treatment, according to the person. 764

Next to a woman in her first pregnancy, the most *bu-ku-ru'* (unclean) thing is a corpse. An animal that passes near one after it is placed in its temporary resting-place, is defiled forever, and must be killed, as unfit for food. Accordingly, an unfrequented spot is selected, where tame pigs or cattle never go. Here a low bench is made of straight sticks, about the size of a coffin, raised a foot or two from the ground; it is carefully fenced in; the corpse is laid on it, and the whole is then covered with another horizontal layer, making a sort of box, carefully bound together with vines. Over all, a pile of branches and brush-wood is thrown so that buzzards and other carrion-eating animals cannot obtain access to the body. The body remains here about a year, to allow complete decomposition. 764 783

In the meantime, the family, or next of kin, on whom devolves the responsibility, proceeds to secure a sufficient number of animals, pigs, or beeves, according to the importance of the defunct. He also plants a corn-field, to supply the material for the chicha. About a year, more or less, after the death, one or more priests are engaged. Generally one is sought and he selects his assistants. For an ordinary person, one is sufficient; while for a chief, or person of distinction half-a-dozen are hardly enough. The chief fixes the time when he will be ready. Another official, a steward, called *Bi-ka'-kra* is also engaged. This latter personage takes entire charge as commissary and master of ceremonies. Under his direction, the corn is ground for the chicha. The number of bunches of plantains that he orders, is obtained; the animals are killed and cooked as he directs; and the food and drink are served to whom, and in what quantities he designates. The host resigns all to him and becomes thenceforth merely a guest, until all is over. 764

When the day approaches, a party goes to the place where the body was deposited. One person, set apart for similar unclean work, opens the package, cleans and re-arranges the bones and does them all up in a

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764 bundle about two feet long; enveloped in a piece of cloth of native make, prepared by being painted in an allegorical manner.

These cloths, about four feet long by two wide, are painted with a red vegetable juice, in figures two to four inches long. The devices vary according to the cause of the death of the individual; whether it be from fever or other disease, old age, snake bite, wounds, &c. One of these cloths, in the Smithsonian museum, is painted for a person who is supposed to have died from snake bite.

The bones, having been tied up in the new bundle, are carried, again under a pole, to the house where the feast is to be held, and are there placed on a little rack overhead, out of the way of persons passing underneath.

Everything being ready, the first installment of food cooked, the chicha brewed, and chocolate boiled, the feast begins.

[123] I had the rare good fortune, not only to witness the ceremony at the death of the persons mentioned above, but also to be present at the death feast of the chief Santiago. That is to say, I saw all that happened on the first and the last days; the intervening thirteen or fourteen being all alike; a succession of eating, drinking, dancing; a disgusting scene of carousal and debauch that did not possess even the merit of variety.

766 The feast was held in a large house, adjoining the residence of the chief Birche. The house is about seventy-five feet long and forty wide; the ends being round, and the only light entering by the large doorway left open at one end. A little rack, made of wild cane was tied up to the sloping side of the house, about eight feet from the floor, and on this was laid the bundle containing the disjointed skeleton of the murdered chief. At a given signal, the principal singer or priest took his position on a low stool, flanked by the other priests and some volunteers. All were regaled with chocolate served in little gourds. The priest began a low chant and

[372] two men started twirling the stick to light the fire. As fast as one tired, another took his place until the sparks glowed in the pit bored in the lower stick. A yell from the priest announced this, and a piece of cotton wool was ignited from the burning dust; with this the fire-wood, previously prepared, was lighted and the fire placed under the remains. Here it was kept up until the end of the feast. After the lighting of the fire, singing and dancing began in earnest, interrupted occasionally by eating and drinking.

766 The dances are very similar; the principal differences visible to an ob-
534 server are in the disposition of the dancers, whether in a circle or in one
535 or two straight lines. In the latter case, the two lines are parallel, and the dancers face each other. The dancing is kept up to the "music" of small drums, carved out of a solid piece of wood, with a single head, made of the belly skin of the iguana; the other end is open. The drum is held under the left arm, and is beaten with the tips of the fingers of the right hand. The drummers, ranged in a line, sing a monotonous song, with a chorus; the time being beaten on the drums. Sometimes a

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dried armadillo skin is scraped with a large bean-like seed; in the same manner as I have seen the negroes of the West Indies scrape a roughened calabash with a bone. The dancers clasp each other over the shoulder, around the waist, or hook arms; both sexes taking part in the dancing, but not in the singing or drumming, these being the especial province of the men. The steps are usually about three forward and to one side, and then the same number backward. When arranged in a circle, this carries them gradually around the musicians. When in a straight line, they keep on the same spot. The songs are a sort of recitative, sometimes impromptu, sometimes of fixed words; the chorus a sort of "fol-de-rol," a series of meaningless syllables. These songs for dancing must not, however, be confounded with the sacred songs of the priests, of which I shall have occasion to make fuller mention in the proper place.

The dances are kept up nearly all, and sometimes all night at the funeral feast; the participants retiring from time to time and sleeping an hour or two when exhausted, and returning with renewed vigor to chicha drinking, eating, and dancing. It is particularly on these occasions, when the older people are too drunk, or too busy to keep strict watch, that the younger folks manage to evade their vigilance and ——. These eminently practical courtships almost invariably precede the asking of the father's consent by the would-be bridegroom.

After more than two weeks of this license and debauchery, during which three cows, about a dozen pigs, hundreds of bunches of plantains, several quintals of rice, and hundreds of gallons of chicha had been devoured, the *bi-ka-kra* or steward announced that the commissary had given out and the riot must come to an end. I was notified according to previous agreement and went at the time appointed. As distinguished guests, our party of four were shown to the best hammocks, where we were seated, and in a few minutes served with cups of chocolate. In a little while, all of the priests seated themselves on low benches, the leader in the middle. The lay chorus singers were ranged in a double line facing each other and below the priests. The fire was carefully carried from its place under the corpse and piled almost between the feet of the principal priest. All drank chocolate and the priests sounded their rattles. The leader began a low dirge-like song in the sacred jargon, which I was told described in detail the journey of the defunct to the other world. It told of the dangerous rivers he had to cross, where alligators lay in wait to devour him; of the great serpents who disputed his path; of the high hills he had to climb with weary steps; of the fearful precipices he must scale; of the beautiful birds with sweet songs, compared with which even the flute-like *silguero* was as a crow; of the gorgeous butterflies that lightened up the path like flying flowers, and finally of his safe arrival at the country of the great *Si-bu*, where he would have nothing to do but eat, drink, sleep, and enjoy himself.

The song was divided into stanzas, and the priests all followed the lead of their chief, the words being a series of set phrases, but in a language

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766 in part unintelligible to the uninitiated. At the end of each stanza was
[533] a chorus, where the priests, who during the stanza kept time with their rattles, now gave a peculiar twirl, and the lay singers joined in the chorus.

As the song approached its end, the leader was furnished with a big gourd of steaming chocolate, holding about a quart. As he finished, landing the dear departed safe beyond further troubles, he announced it with a most unearthly yell, in which all hands joined; he at the same time turning the chocolate over the fire, totally extinguishing it. The party at once arose and for a minute or two all was bustle and confusion of preparation.

[767] A person, whose office it is to handle the dead, endeavored to lower the bundle but it was a little out of his reach. Nobody else could touch it
[783] for fear of defiling himself. To lend a hand would have cost an Indian three days of purification. I drew my long knife, which all learn to carry in this country, as an actual necessity; and with a couple of blows cut the fastenings and brought the little cane rack, bundle of bones and all, tumbling into the outstretched arms of the official, with much more haste than solemnity. Nobody seemed shocked, and being a foreigner, and
[123] withal a medicine man, who had made cures where their best doctors had failed, I was of course impregnable to *bu-ku-ru'*. The aforesaid official now lashed the package to its stick, and two long slender strings of loosely twisted cotton were tied to the head of the package.

[587] Santiago had had three wives. One of them had re-married to his successor; but there were two remaining in widowhood. A procession was formed. First came the priests with their rattles. Next the chorus singers with their drums. Next the corpse, borne by two men, and preceded by the two widows, each holding the end of one of the cotton strings, leading the dead, as it were, to his final resting-place. Next ourselves, as the most distinguished persons present, and escorted by the two chiefs. Behind us came the older men, and following them the usual rag, tag, and bob-tail of young men, women, boys, and persons of no account generally. Some of the boys however, true to boy nature, were as usual irrepressible, and instead of keeping decorously in place, skirmished ahead, and on the flanks of the procession, mounting stumps, logs, or other commanding points to take in the general effect of the pageant. As the procession filed out of the house, some old chicha jars
[768] were carried out and ostentatiously broken; but I observed that nothing of real value was destroyed. As soon as the line got fairly under way, the priests struck up another song which was kept up until the procession halted.

Everybody had been on so long a debauch that it was decided to take a rest of three or four days before the party started off. But it was necessary that the bones should be removed from the house. A temporary ranch had therefore been built a few hundred yards distant; and to this the remains were carried and deposited until the bearers were in a fit condition to proceed.

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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The final disposal of the remains is a matter of great care. The whole of the tribe goes to the district of Bri-bri for this purpose. The receptacle is a square pit, about four feet deep and ten feet square. This is paved on the bottom with stones, and is roofed over from the weather, by a series of heavy hewn slabs of a very durable wood, open on the front and ends, and sloping to the ground at the back. Each family possesses one of these pits and here, after the funeral feast, the bundle of bones is carried and deposited. After the rest, the remains of Santiago were carried to the "royal" pit and deposited without further ceremony. 764

The Cabecars, according to Mr. Lyon, have about the same ceremony, but their pits are mere holes, not paved, and covered by planks laid on the ground level.

The Tiribis have a death feast, but it differs in some respects from the others. The body is buried immediately after death, but no longer with the property of the deceased, and, of course, the defunct is not present at his final feast, as with the Bri-bris.

Mr. Lyon, to whom I owe much of the information in the present memoir, has described to me one circumstance, in connection with these death feasts, that I have not witnessed. The warriors among the Bri-bris, who fought in the war with the Tiribis were honored with a little different ceremonial. They are now all gone, and the ceremony is extinct. At the death feast, a person entered, clad in a long gown, wig, and mask. The gown and wig were made of mastate, or bark cloth, covered with "old man's beard" moss, sewed all over it, making a shaggy and nearly shapeless mass. The mask was made of half a "tree calabash," properly fixed up with a wax nose, &c. A copy of this entire dress was made for me by an old Indian, and is now in the Smithsonian museum. The person thus accoutred, took part in the dance, made free with the women and scared the children without let or hindrance. Mothers with young children took them to him and placed them for a moment on his shoulder, "to prevent the evil spirit from doing them harm." Neither Lyon nor the Indians could give me a very clear account of what spirit, whether good or evil, this represented. But the people seemed to regard him as rather of the malevolent sort; to be classed under the general head of "*Bi*" or Devil. Doubtless this, at one time had a distinct meaning, now lost. 766 [532]

No strictly religious belief can be said to exist among these Indians, in the sense that it is usually understood among us. They have, however, a series of ideas or beliefs which affect their daily lives and are never lost sight of. In connection with the funeral feast, described above, I have referred to their idea of a future state. 771

During the year that the body lies in the woods, the disembodied spirit prowls around, living on wild fruits, of which the wild cacao is the only one of which I know the name, although others were also pointed out to me. At the end of that time, when the funeral fire is kindled, the spirit is thus attracted to the feast, whence it departs on its final journey. 775

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
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Bribri

766 "The warriors among the Bri-bris, who fought in the war with the Tiribris were honored with a little different ceremonial. They are now all gone, and the ceremony is extinct. At the death feast, a person entered, clad in a long gown, wig, and mask. The gown and wig were made of mastate, or bark cloth, covered with 'old man's beard moss,' sewed all over it, making a shaggy and nearly shapeless mass. The mask was made of half a 'tree calabash,' properly fixed up with a wax nose, &c. A copy of this entire dress was made for me by an old Indian, and is now in the Smithsonian Museum [pl. xxx]. The person thus accoutred, took part in the dance, made free with the women and scared the children without let or hindrance. Mothers with young children took them to him and placed them for a moment on his shoulder, 'to prevent the evil spirit from doing them harm.'"

784 *Tabu.*—On going into Bribri houses we frequently were earnestly warned by the Indians not to handle certain objects, as they were *bukurû* or tabu. On inquiry it was learned that it was customary for an Indian who wished to leave home to pronounce certain charms over his valuables, which then became *bukurû*, or tabu, not only to others but to himself, until a shaman was summoned to remove the spell by blowing upon them and singing to the time of his

586 nowadays it does exist particularly amongst the Indians who have contact with the *ladino*-populated coast. Formerly, it was unknown, but today a man leaves a woman, or a woman a man, if they feel like it.

764 Death. Whatever ceremonies existed amongst the *Boruca* in regard to death have almost entirely disappeared. It is interesting that the *Boruca* do not cry at funerals. At the [556] wake, there is a feast the size of which depends upon the economic status of the deceased. Coffee and chicha are always served as drinks. The women put the body, at times with the hands folded as in prayer, on a long wooden bench or on wooden tablets, and cover it with any piece of cloth available. Three candles are placed alongside the body, one at each side of the face and one at the end. Sometimes, a candle is put by the feet. Prayers are recited all night during the wake. In the morning, men tie the body with fiber rope to the bench or planks, fastening to them two poles horizontally to serve as handles, and generally carry the whole to the church. Here an Indian, the warden, officiates in the absence of the priest. After the Mass, or the few prayers if there is no priest, the body still on the bench (see fig. 10, *a*), and still covered with cloth, is carried by the men to the cemetery, friends of the dead following. Here, bench and all, it is deposited in a shallow grave (about 4 feet), and very infrequently, leaves or flowers are scattered over or placed on it. When the deceased leaves no relative, his extra clothes are placed under his body and used as a bed in the grave. If the dead has enjoyed a good
● 766 position within the community during life, then a small tunnel is made in a side of the grave, and the body is placed there. This is called a "tomb." When a child dies, the body is tied in a white cloth and the one accordion in the village is played all the way to the graveyard. The whole town accompanies the body.

769 One year after the death of an individual, the *Boruca* celebrate what is known as the "birthday" of the death. Another feast is given at the house of the deceased. This feast must have a lot of chicha, and often lasts until the following morning or until the chicha disappears.

[P.69(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

476 574 273 traditions, are known by the Spanish term *juntas* or *bLo-ʒé* (chicha-to drink) in Bribri, or in Cabécar *dí*[204]-*ʒɔ* (chicha-to drink). They are held when there is need of group labor such as building a house, clearing a field, [571] making a bridge, etc. It is the only time except at death or bone burial that groups of people meet. The person giving the *junta* must supply liberal quantities of chicha and at least sufficient food. Dancing with singing, particularly [535] [533] on the Caribbean side, forms part of the entertainment. On the Pacific, singing is not as [184] [534]

[Text continues TOP OF P.69(B)--Analys]

THE ARTS

534 **Musical Instruments.** Upright drums are the preferred instruments of Talamanca. In pre- [172] Columbian graves they are found fashioned of clay and occur from miniature sizes to three [824] [237] feet in height. Today they are made of palm or cedar with one end covered with iguana skin and the other end open. The skin is [381] [824] fastened to the wood with a glue made from the red fruit of the *butsí* tree and is then tied with *pita*. Their size varies from two and a half to three feet and they are played by hand. Formerly a small all-wooden drum with a [766] [184] U-shaped slit[205] was used at the burial of chiefs. These were played with a bone or a stick. The people on the Pacific side do not have the upright drum but use the Chiricano *caja* or round drum of palm wood covered at [237] both ends with wild boar skin and played with two sticks.

534 237 In Talamanca, and as a rule in all *jawá* houses, armadillo shells are rubbed with a stick while those of land turtles are used in a similar manner or as clappers. The conch shell is made [202] into a horn to relay messages but not for a musical instrument. Rattles of gourds filled with seeds or pebbles and with fowl bone or wooden handles are also seen.

533 **Tempo.** There are varied beats for the upright drum: 4 short and 1 long; 3 short and 1 long; 2 short and 1 long. As many as twenty drums were played at one time in Talamanca [184] when the Singer functioned. On the Pacific side, the old pieces are seldom heard. The

[Text continues middle of P.69(B)--Anal/57]

[192] [205] *dí* is also the word for water and is often used for river.